## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION in a LEGISLATIVE HEARING

Pursuant to the Colorado State Constitution, the sessions of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and of the committees, shall be open to the public.

[Article V, Sec. 14]

The formation of public policy is public business and should not be conducted in secret.

Public participation in committee hearings is welcomed, however, be aware that space is limited. Also it should be noted that at times meetings are relocated at the last minute to accommodate larger attendance.

Once a bill has been introduced in the House, the Speaker assigns the bill to a committee for study and consideration. The Chairman of the committee determines when a bill is to be scheduled for a hearing, and the order in which testimony, if any, will be taken. After a bill has been considered, any roll call votes taken in committee are recorded and this record is available for public inspection. [HR 25 (j)(9)]

The House calendar, published daily, contains a schedule of committee hearings and the bills to be considered by each committee, but there may be additions or deletions to the published calendar. Committee meetings and the measures to be considered will also be announced daily on the floor of the House. House committees normally meet in the meeting rooms located between the elevators in the capitol basement.

Information on committee assignment and scheduling of a particular bill is available by calling the Information Center (303-866-3055). Copies of bills, calendars, journals can be obtained from the Information Center which is located across from the Capitol at 14<sup>th</sup> and Sherman.

All this information and more is available on the internet. A citizen can also listen to the Colorado legislature at work via audio broadcasts of committee meetings and of House Legislative proceedings. Visit the Legislative home page:

## www.leg.state.co.us

Pursuant to the Constitution, the House adopts and enforces rules that govern their actions. [Article V, Sec. 12]

House committees are governed by the rules that are adopted at the beginning of each General Assembly. The chairmen of House committees must abide by these rules, and in order to ensure timely and orderly meetings they also are empowered to enforce the rules.

The committee chairman has the discretion and the authority to:

- limit discussion on a measure and may exclude what is determined to be repetitious or irrelevant testimony. [HR 25(j)(1)(E.2)]
- clear the public from any meeting in the event of a disturbance which is disruptive to the legislative proceedings. [2-2-404 and 18-9-110, CRS]
- ask that the sergeant-at-arms remove any one person from a committee hearing or meeting whom the chairman believes is disruptive to the legislative proceedings or the decorum of the committee. [2-2-404 and 18-9-110, CRS]
- request that the sergeant-at-arms enforce any provisions of this state law that prohibits disruptions in public buildings. [2-2-404 and 18-9-110, CRS]

The Speaker shall accredit the persons who shall act as representatives of the media. [HR 3(b)(7)] [2-2-404(d), CRS]

The following press credentials are accepted, although other members of the media may be accredited at the Speaker's discretion:

- Colorado Press Association
- Colorado Broadcasters Association

The use of media equipment may be restricted to only those members of the media who have been accredited by the Speaker.

The sergeant-at-arms is empowered by the Speaker to enforce all rules [HR 44(a)].

## House committees:

- meet on a regular schedule during the session.
- do not meet when House is in formal session.

Scheduling, location, and order of bills to be heard are subject to change at any time. The Sergeant-at-arms will have up-to-date information.

The order of bills to be heard is posted outside the door of each committee that is meeting, The chairman will announce each bill, after which the bill's sponsor will address the committee. The chairman may then ask for testimony from proponents and opponents.

Hearings are conducted using formal parliamentary procedure. Please note the following:

- Hearings usually start on time.
- Citizens testifying must sign in.
- Name, address, reason for testifying is given after being recognized by the chairman.
- Courteous language is expected.

- Briefness is appreciated no duplication of testimony.
- Informative responses to questions are expected.
- Written testimony may be submitted.
- Public displays or disruptions are not allowed.
  (No placards, applause, verbal interruptions, etc.)
- Cell phones and pagers need to be turned off.
- Food or beverages are not allowed in committee rooms.
- If testimony is taken, there may be occasions when not everyone will have a chance to testify.
- Usually, once a hearing is closed on a particular bill, no further testimony is heard.
- Immediate committee action following a hearing should not be expected, action on the bill may be laid over.
- All committee votes are public. If a vote is taken on a subsequent day that information will be available.
- After testifying on a particular bill, all are invited to stay and listen until the end of the committee meeting.

Thank you for your interest in Colorado's political process.